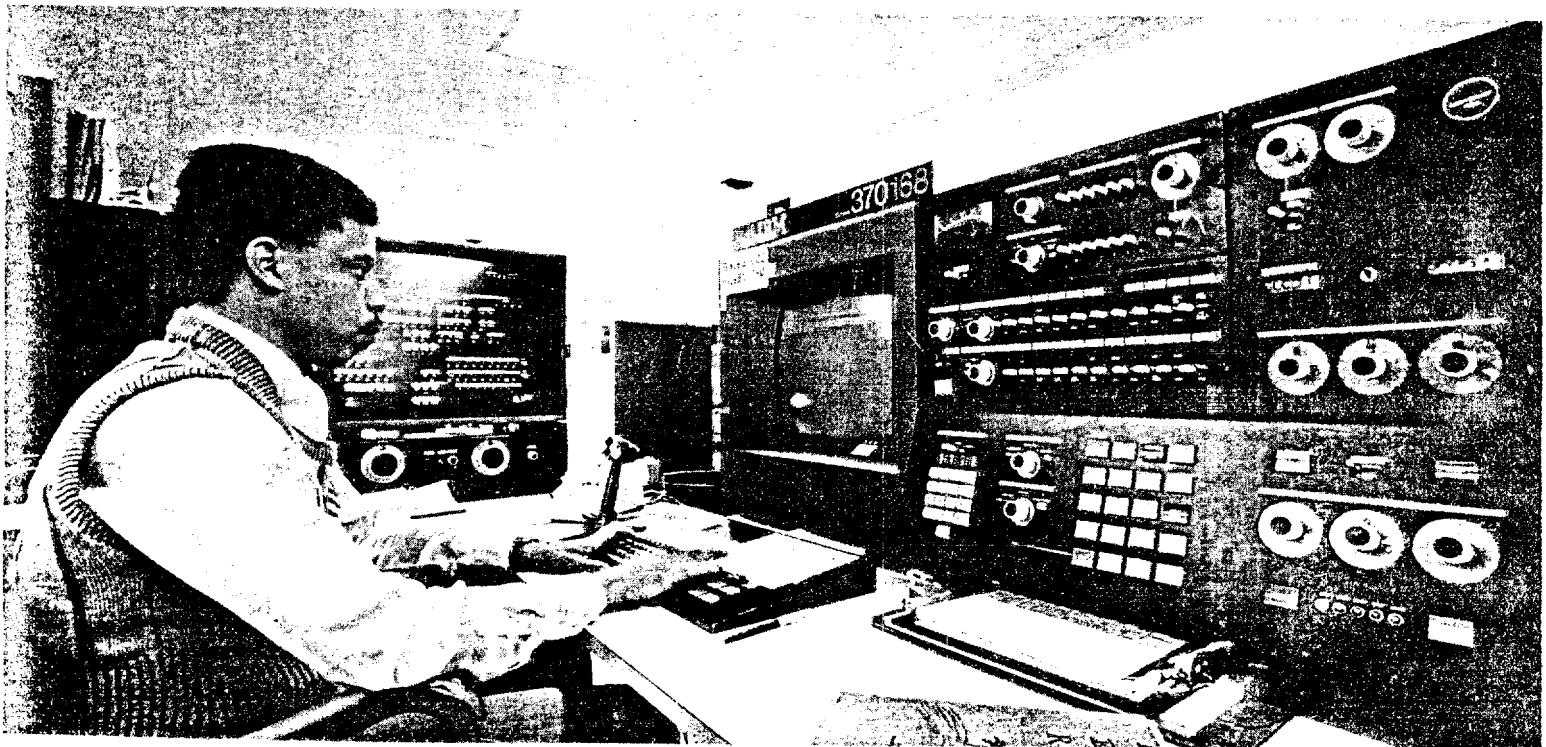# Office of Automated Data Systems

Major Functions

OADS (and its forerunner, OIS) was organized in 1972 to provide centralized direction and data processing services in response to the independent plans of several agencies to provide for their future ADP needs. Taking advantage of the economies of scale and coordinating agencies' ADP use and resource sharing, OADS offers centralized data processing services in five major computer centers, coordinates large scale ADP development, develops short- and long-range ADP guidance, and provides Departmental ADP direction by developing policies, plans, procedures and standards.

Major Accomplishments in FY 1975

. Centralized Services -- FY 1975 marked dramatic improvements in the quality and reliability of computer services offered by OADS and a complete turnaround in user confidence. Rate and cost reduction and strong financial control gave a glimpse of the economies and efficiencies possible in centralized services. Especially significant accomplishments which contributed to this change are:

.. ADS converted its halting time sharing services into a responsive, usable media for problem solving. Previously,

The Washington Computer Center processed twice as many jobs in FY 1975 — over 30,000 per month — and reduced its rates by 41% for the last six months of that fiscal year.

the Washington Computer Center
(WCC) accommodated 3,257 ses-
sions per month, requiring a
wait of 1 minute, 7 seconds
for service. Today this
Center processed work for 5,460
time sharing sessions, with a
wait of just 17 seconds for the
computer to respond to a service
request.

.. ADS increased the reliability
of all USDA centers from 89.9
percent in FY 1974 to 96.9
percent in FY 1975, providing
an additional 100+ hours of
processing time a month, and
allowing an additional 12,000
to 13,000 jobs per month to
be processed in the WCC alone.

.. In FY 1974, ADS processed
626,000 jobs in its centers,
in FY 1975 they processed
1,024,000 -- a 64 percent
increase.

.. Sophisticated tape and disk
management systems were
developed in several computer
centers which when fully
operational will free up
scarce disk and tape storage
and guard against accidental
or deliberate destruction or
loss of data.

.. ADS reduced its average cost
per job from $25.31 to $19.11
by carefully tuning USDA's
telecommunications network
and eliminating the cost of
a communication concentrator,
transferring workload from
Minneapolis Commodity Office
to Fort Collins and termi-
nating use of equipment in
Minneapolis and instituting
a comprehensive, strict zero-
based budgeting system. WCC,
for example, reduced its cost
15 percent for the first half

of the year and 41 percent
for the second half, return-
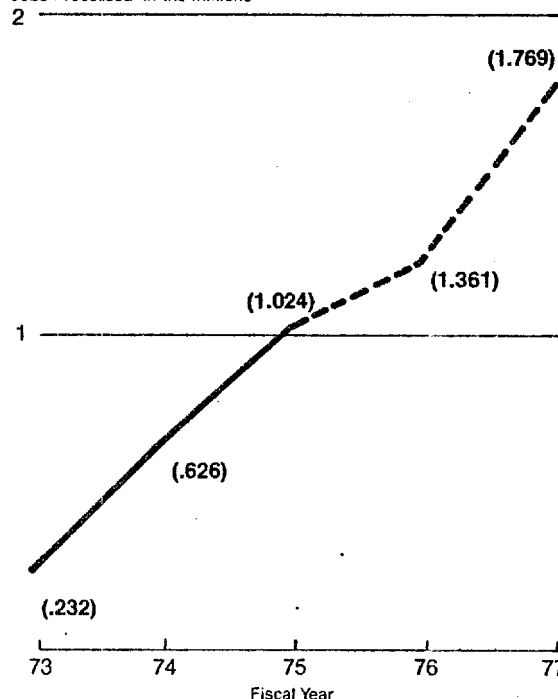ing some 2 million dollars
to the program agencies.

The New Orleans Computer
Center (NOCC) through complete
management controls and
sophisticated equipment tuning
was able to process more jobs
than the year before and re-
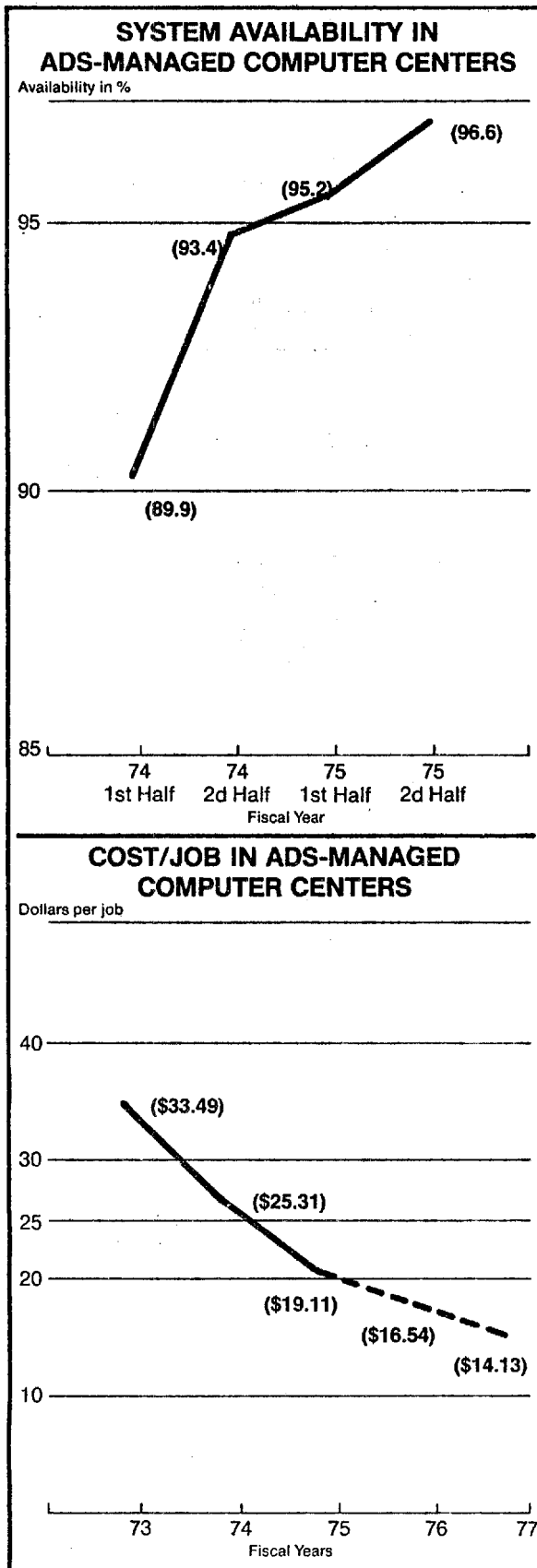turned $2.7 million to its
users.

Finally, the Fort Collins
Computer Center who started
out the fiscal year operating
in the red improved its oper-
ations and generated enough
revenue to operate in the black
for the last quarter.

. Centralized Direction -- ADS re-
vamped and reorganized its staff

INCREASING WORKLOAD FOR DEPARTMENTAL COMPUTER CENTERS SINCE FY 1973

Jobs Processed in the Millions

(1.769)

(1.361)

(1.024)

(.626)

(.232)

| 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 77 |

Fiscal Year

SYSTEM AVAILABILITY IN ADS-MANAGED COMPUTER CENTERS

Availability in %

(96.6)

(95.2)

95

(93.4)

90

(89.9)

85

| 74 1st Half | 74 2d Half | 75 1st Half | 75 2d Half |

Fiscal Year

COST/JOB IN ADS-MANAGED COMPUTER CENTERS

Dollars per job

40

($33.49)

30

($25.31)

25

20

($19.11)

($16.54)

($14.13)

10

| 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 77 |

Fiscal Years

structure and mission, instituted an MBO system which clearly communicated what was expected of the staff, and how their activities related and contributed to the overall office objectives. Specifically:

.. ADS developed, systematized and is in the process of implementing a Departmentwide ADP planning cycle. Previously, agencies within the Department and ADS developed their plans independently with no coordination or common purpose. Matching and tailoring ADS' equipment capacity with agencies' requirements would be happenstance without an integrated planning system. ADS' system estimates USDA's long range ADP needs on a yearly basis based on agencies' projected requirements. This data which also satisfies OMB's and GSA's reporting requirements is used to compute future Departmental computer costs, distributing these projected costs to the agencies, and allow them enough time to properly budget for this expense.

.. ADS recognizing the weaknesses in the Department's previous requirements study for its major ADP procurement, initiated a new requirements study which included a comprehensive economic analysis of alternatives and provided supporting documentation for continuing with a slightly altered version of the procurement. However, before the study was complete, GAO investigations publicized the original procurement's shortcomings and substantial Congressional interest occurred. Congress recently placed limitations on the Working Capital Fund which resulted in USDA canceling the procure-
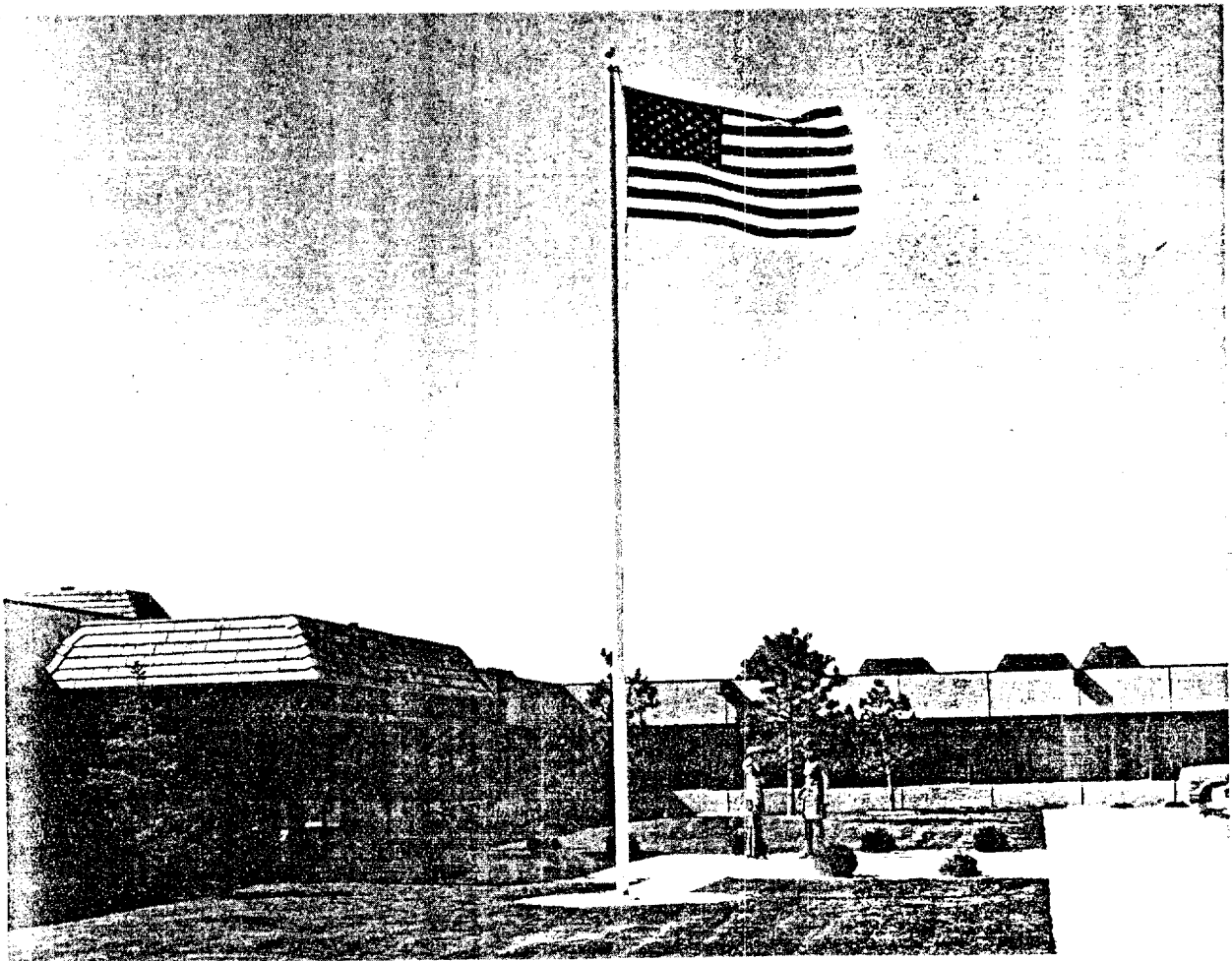
ment. As a result, ADS' ability to adequately service users of the St. Louis Computer Center, Fort Collins Computer Center, and New Orleans Computer Center in FY 1976 is limited and they will have to devote considerable resources to up-grade equipment on a center-by-center basis.

.. Along with all these activities, the small staff reviewed agency requests for ADP procurements, initiated a plan to develop a cost effective USDA telecommunications system for USDA's future requirements.

As these achievements were being accomplished, ADS reduced its personnel from 465 to 421 positions and decreased the average grade of its staff from 12.2 to 11.2.
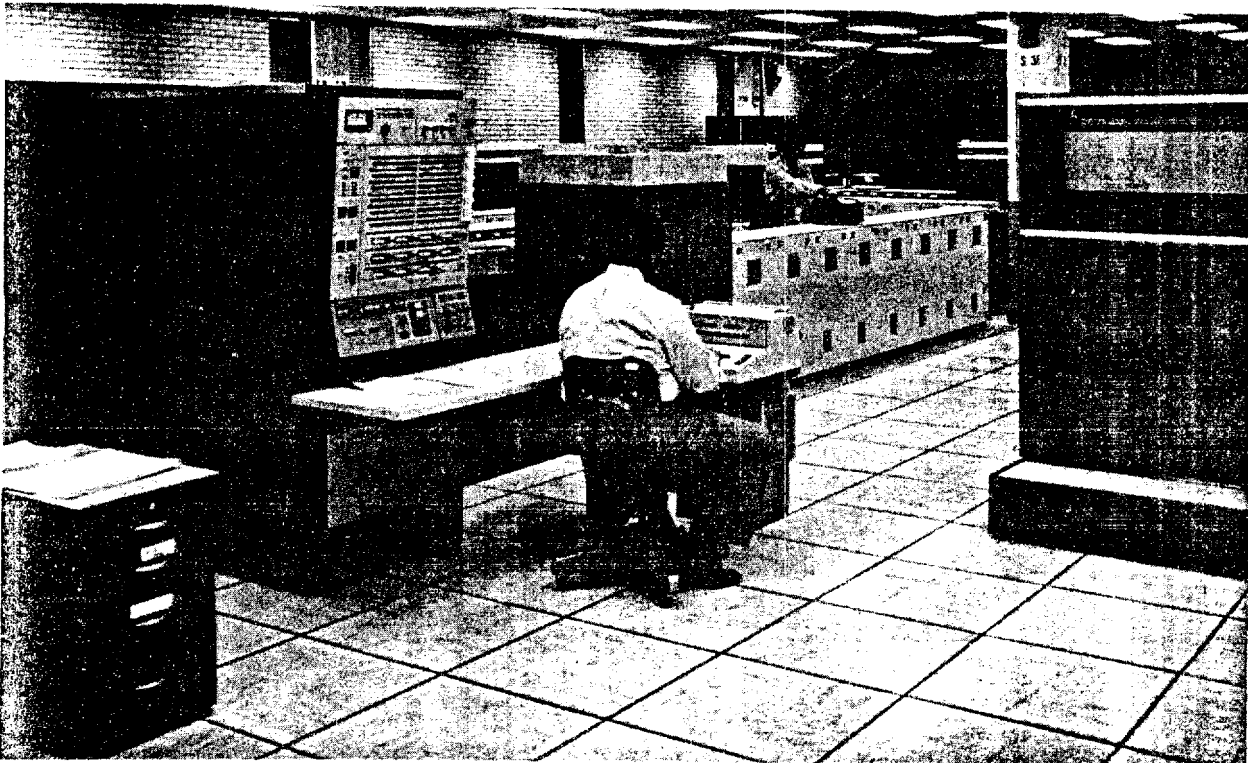
Major Plans for FY 1976

. Upgrade the computer facilities in New Orleans, Fort Collins, and St. Louis which will increase ADS' capacity by 90 percent and allow them to process significantly more jobs than they can today, will satisfy the Farmers Home Administration, Forest Service and the National Finance Center's projected workload increase.

The Fort Collins Computer Center supports Forest Service's and Food and Nutrition Service's data processing needs.

. Capitalize on and fully coordinate the systematized planning process developed in FY 1975 by designing and publishing a Departmental long-range plan.

. Establish a Departmentwide ADP training program responsive to user needs to provide overall

better management of the Department's ADP resources.

. Develop and implement a coordinated ADP field installation plan geared toward providing agency program and management needs in the most efficient manner. Today FmHA and ASCS are sharing 10 terminals on a pilot basis.

NOCC's IBM 360/65 Computer System supports The National Finance Center's central voucher and uniform accounting systems.

TRANSMITTAL SLIP	DATE

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ROOM NO.	BUILDING
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REMARKS:

The attached is part of the Annual
Report of the Assistant Secretary for
Administration, Department of Agricul-
ture. The complete report is in DD/A
Plans Staff should you wish to review
it.

████████████

P.S. Please pass to Lew and
Frank for their info.

FROM: DD/A Plans Staff

ROOM NO.	BUILDING	EXTENSION
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FORM NO. 241   REPLACES FORM 36-8   (47)
1 FEB 55   WHICH MAY BE USED.

STATINTL

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

A report of Agricultures' Office of Automated Data Systems

FROM:			EXTENSION	NO.
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TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE RECEIVED	DATE FORWARDED	OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
1. ExO		, 16	CDD	To All This annual report of computer activities in Agriculture provides some interesting ~~computer~~ data for comparison with our activities.
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